

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending in the present application, with claims 1 and 12 being independent. Claims 12-24 have been added by this amendment, which do not add any new subject matter.

Request for Interview

Upon receipt and prior to an examination on the merits, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact Applicants' representative, Martin R. Geissler (Reg. No. 51,011), at 703-205-8000 to schedule an interview.

Conclusion

An early and favorable action on the merit is respectfully requested.

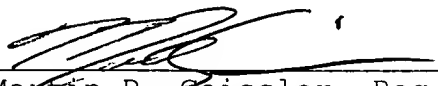
If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees

required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By


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